



# She's Alive!!

by John Allred

*John Allred of Phoenix, Arizona is a professional GK artist with dozens of clients. Having painted and customized hundreds of model kits, model dioramas, statues and busts, painting is his full-time gig.*

*John has written several articles for Black Heart's website and has also been an instructor for the Badger Airbrush/Black Heart Models airbrushing and model finishing classes at hobby and monster conventions across the country.*

*When Black Heart released our 360° Series 1:1 scale Bride of Frankenstein bust, John fell in love. First, he fell in love with Jeff Yagher's beautiful sculpture which was produced as Black Heart's bust. Then he fell in love with Terri, a beautiful live woman, who also loved the bust. John loved both ladies so much that he bought two of our Bride busts, one for himself and one to paint for Terri.*

*John discussed with us writing an article for our Bride bust. He was eager to get to it in order to impress the new lady in his life. And we were just as eager to see the **Allred Treatment** on our bust and to share it with other modelers, painters, collectors and visitors to our website.*



*Thanks, John, for making Black Heart look good.*



The first thing I noticed about the new Bride of Frankenstein bust from Black Heart was how large it is and how much detail is in the sculpture. Sculptor Jeff Yagher continues to amaze as he captures another likeness with subtle details. I usually began by deciding on what kind of approach I am going for as far as the look of the piece. For the Bride I wanted to stay pretty true to the film look which is full on fantasy. There is no way a way a freshly re-animated body composed of parts from various corpses would ever look as gorgeous as Elsa Lancaster looked in the film. But that was all part of the fun of this classic film. After the usual minimal sanding and cleaning, I primed the bust with lacquer primer white.



I wanted to keep her pale, but not as pale as her white gown so, keeping my palate simple, I mixed a blend of Liquitex Soft body acrylics together using just three colors; parchment as the base color with a few drops of sandalwood and violet. This gave me a good base for her fleshtones.



From there I can just add some more sandalwood or taupe for shading into my basic flesh-tone color for shading around the hairline, ears, nose and jawline. Then I take some pastel chalks and further define the same shadows. At this point I want to establish the eye placement. I noticed that her pose has the right hand below her head as if she is recoiling from the monster.



With that in mind, I take a few pics and pull them into PhotoShop. Here I can play with the placement of the irises. This is a great tool as you can move things around until you get the right effect. After deciding on a downward angle, I penciled in the irises making them as big as possible without the dreaded "doll eye" effect. Detailing the eyes, in my opinion, is one of the most important parts of the painting process. "Windows to the soul", for sure. Elsa had big brown eyes and she was very young.

After I get the basic shape established with some brown washes, I seal it with dullcoat and start doing the striations within the iris with off-white. After I seal this, I wash a golden brown over them. This gives them some color and pushes them back into the overall brown color around them. At this point I usually turn the bust around in different directions, watching the irises as I turn the bust to see whether they are holding true to shape or are distorting. There will almost always be some distortion from one or two angles that has to be corrected due to the fact that you're not painting on a flat surface. So I try and make those corrections before I get too far along.





Because I wanted to “glam up” her looks a bit more, I added some color around her eyes. I added a drop of Navy Blue to my basic fleshtone color and misted this along her inner brow fading out at her temple. This was a bit tricky as I had already finished her eyes, so I had to mask her off around the eyeballs with some silly putty. But I liked the effect.

I painted her eyebrows using burnt sienna and I detailed the eyelashes starting with the lower lashes. I am going to use false eyelashes for the top but need to establish a line across the lid for them to set on. Once that was done, I deepened the frown lines above the eyes with a little pastel chalk to give her more emotion.

I have looked at [The Bride of Frankenstein](#) about a million times over the years and there is always much discussion of her hair color. The film is black and white but seemed to be an auburn red, or dark to medium red.

So I start with a burnt sienna and hand paint all around the white bolts of hair on her temples. The hair work on this piece is extremely detailed and nothing short of amazing. Pay attention to all the crevasses and ridges through-out the hair; I spent the better part of a day painting it and still found little gaps that I missed.

Once that was done I mixed the burnt sienna with some burnt umber for a darker shade and airbrushed some shadows into the hair, just to break it up and dull down the brightness factor.



I gave the white bolts some interference blue and pearlescent white for a brighter effect.

At this point all that was left to do on the head was to gloss the eyes and add the eyelashes. Adding eyelashes is really pretty easy and adds a lot to the believability of these pieces. I just pull them off the container pack and set them on the upper lid edge, letting the factory glue tack do its job. Now if I was shipping this out to a client I would use a little CA glue dropped on with a toothpick for added strength. The head is now complete and I can move onto the upper body/base.

I wanted a very pure white for the gown. So, I didn't do anything to the white primer I had already sprayed on it. Fortunately, there is enough detail at this scale to get away with not doing anything to such a large area.



The wrapped hand is another story. I wanted a flesh-colored gauze look to the bandages but not too close to real flesh, as they somehow have a "generic" look to them. After I mixed up a fleshy color, I added some gray to it just to diminish its intensity. This was hand-painted with a fairly thick wash. I did a bit of dry brushing over it but no real shading on it. I just let the natural shadows do their thing. I painted the necrotic-looking fingers to match the fleshtones on her face but gave them a more gruesome look. With dark blood pooling at the base of the fingernails as this does happen in death.

And there you have it! I am happy with the way this one turned out and I have to say it is an excellent piece of work by sculptor Jeff Yagher and George (AKA Mr. Black Heart). Looking forward to seeing what they have lined up in the future. If you have any questions just drop me a line via Facebook or at [jallred2@cox.net](mailto:jallred2@cox.net). Model on! JA





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